

## Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, NATO, FR

SUBJECT: NAC COMMEMORATES POMPIDOU'S DEATH

SUMMARY: APRIL 3 COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURNED AFTER STATEMENTS FROM SYG, COUNCIL DEAN DE STAERCKE AND FRENCH PERMREP COMMEMORATING LATE FRENCH PRESIDENT POMPIDOU. END SUMMARY.

1. IN NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL, APRIL 3, SECRETARY GENERAL LUNS NOTED THE DEATH OF FRENCH PRESIDENT POMPIDOU AND EXPRESSED CONDOLENCES IN THE NAME OF THE COUNCIL TO FRENCH PERMREP DE ROSE AND, THROUGH HIM, TO THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE. LUNS BRIEFLY TRACED POMPIDOU'S CAREER WHICH LED HIM ULTIMATELY TO ACCEPT THE "DIFFICULT TRIAL" OF SUCCEEDING PRESIDENT DE GAULLE. HAVING MET PERSONALLY WITH POMPIDOU, LUNS SAID HE HAD ALWAYS BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE FRENCH PRESIDENT'S LIVELY INTELLIGENCE AND BROAD INTELLECTUAL GRASP. HE HAD PARTICULARLY ADMIRER POMPIDOU FOR SHOULDERING DIFFICULT BURDENS OF STATE UNDER THE PAIN AND SUFFERING OF HIS FATAL ILLNESS. LUNS CONCLUDED WITH THE REMARK THAT POMPIDOU HAD DIED IN LINE OF DUTY, "LIKE A SOLDIER IN THE SADDLE."

2. NAC DEAN DE STAERCKE (BELGIUM) NOTED THE UNIVERSAL REACTION OF CONSTERNATION AND SADNESS AT POMPIDOU'S DEATH. DE STAERCKE REFERRED TO THE "INTENSE HUMAN DRAMA" ATTENDANT TO THE FRENCH PRESIDENT'S DEATH AND TO THE SUFFERING FOR HIM UNCLASSIFIED

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AND HIS FAMILY THAT PRECEDED IT. ALMOST AS IN THE ROMAN DICTUM THAT AN "EMPEROR MUST DIE STANDING UP," SAID DE STAERCKE, POMPIDOU'S COURAGE AND EXAMPLE IN CARRYING ON WITH HIS HEAVY RESPONSIBILITIES EVEN WHILE CERTAIN THAT HE WAS DYING WOULD

INSPIRE ALL MANKIND. DE STAERCKE NOTED THAT FRANCE AND THE WORLD MUST NOW FACE THE SITUATION LEFT BY POMPIDOU'S PASSING, AND HE HOPED FRANCE WOULD EMERGE STRENGTHENED AND UNITED AFTER THE PERIOD JUST AHEAD.

3. FOLLOWING COUNCIL OBSERVANCE OF A MINUTE OF SILENCE, FRENCH PERMREP DE ROSE THANKED LUNS AND THE COUNCIL FOR WORDS OF CONDOLENCE WHICH HE SAID HE WOULD PROMPTLY PASS TO HIS GOVERNMENT. DE ROSE NOTED THAT NEWS OF POMPIDOU'S DEATH HAD SHOCKED AND SURPRISED EVERYONE. ONLY UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES DO THE TRUE DIMENSIONS OF THE MAN BECOME CLEAR. THE LOSS WAS RENDERED ALL THE MORE TELLING BY THE SUFFERING WHICH POMPIDOU HAD ENDURED WHILE CONTINUING TO GOVERN FRANCE.

4. DE ROSE SUGGESTED THAT THE FRENCH HAD CHOSEN POMPIDOU FOR HIS STRENGTH, DELICACY, SOLIDITY AND IMPARTIALITY, AND SAID THAT THE FRENCH PEOPLE RECOGNIZED THEMSELVES IN POMPIDOU. HIS LOSS WAS FELT BY MANY AS A LOSS OF ONE OF THE GREAT SOURCES OF STRENGTH IN THE WEST. DE ROSE RECALLED POMPIDOU'S SUPPORT FOR NATO. THE COUNCIL'S COMMENTS ABOUT HIS DEATH SHOWED THAT FRANCE IS NOT ALONE IN ITS SUFFERING. THESE BONDS, SAID DE ROSE, ARE STRONGER THAN ALL THE FORMAL AGREEMENTS WHICH BIND THE ALLIES.

5. IN ADJOURNING THE NAC AS A TOKEN OF RESPECT FOR PRESIDENT POMPIDOU, SYG LUNS ANNOUNCED THAT FLAGS WILLBE AT HALF-STAFF DURING AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE APRIL 4 MILITARY CEREMONIES HONORING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY. LUNS WILL OPEN HIS REMARKS ON THE OCCASION WITH REFERENCE TO THE PASSING OF THE FRENCH PRESIDENT.  
RUMSFELD

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